

FLIGHT

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The Outlook

The C.A.G.

THE Civil Air Guard scheme for cheaper flying instruction, announced by Sir Kingsley Wood on Saturday (and foreshadowed in *Flight* last week) is based upon an extension of the present light aeroplane club subsidy scheme. Clubs which are already subsidised will form a C.A.G. section, and those not already subsidised will be eligible provided they comply with certain requirements in the matter of aeroplanes and flying charges.

The *raison d'être* of the C.A.G. scheme is, of course, to encourage, by lowering the hourly charges, many more people to take up flying, and it is not surprising that it has already met with an enthusiastic response all over the country. Basically the idea is commendable, but unless it is made perfectly clear from the very beginning that a very large percentage of the cheaply trained (cheaply to themselves, that is) pilots would, in time of emergency, be called upon to assist "in other directions concerned with aviation for which their services might be required" and not to do flying, there is likely to be ultimate disappointment and dissatisfaction.

An "A" licence pilot who has been taught in a light plane provided with a minimum of equipment is not likely to be of much use if put on board one of the latest military aeroplanes, and will require a good deal of further training and practice, even if otherwise eligible, for ferry work or similar Service duties. The most that can be expected is that he (or she) will have become accustomed to being in the air and will have a certain amount of experience in judging height and speed during the approach to land.

Weak Points

THE idea of putting C.A.G. members into "a special brown overall with a specially designed 'Civil Air Guard' badge on the pocket" is not likely to make for harmony in those clubs at which some members are trained on the existing basis and have not undertaken to offer their services in a national emergency. None of us likes to be made conspicuous, and it would be better were this part of the scheme omitted.

From the clubs' point of view the C.A.G. plan is likely to prove a financial success, and after the lean time many

of the clubs have had none will grudge them their four years of relative plenty. With a grant of £50 instead of £25 for "A" licences on standard training types, and £30 for those on light aircraft types, the new hourly rates of 10s. and 5s. at week-ends and 5s. and 2s. 6d. during the week should suffice. But the quadrupling of the flying grant for post-licence flying, attractive as it looks, is largely nullified by the limit of ten hours per annum. It is difficult to see why such an absurd limit has been fixed.

Ten hours' flying a year after obtaining the "A" licence is no use to anyone, either the pilot or the country, and fifty hours would have been more reasonable. Probably the assumption is that after a pupil has obtained his licence and has done his ten hours' flying afterwards, at the cheap rates, he will be willing to pay standard rates for the rest of his flying. That assumption seems to us a very doubtful one, and it is precisely the post-licence flying that is valuable. In fact, we would go further and say that it would have been better to have kept the pre-licence hourly rates higher and to make post-licence flying really cheap. That is where the shoe pinches, as evidenced by the large number of "A" licence pilots who have in the past given up flying after getting their "tickets."

The decision that "aircraft of foreign manufacture may be used, though their use will be reviewed after about four years" is typical of the panic measures which the Air Ministry is now adopting right and left. Why, in the name of common sense, foreign aircraft manufacturers should be allowed to benefit is difficult to understand. That we should go to America for training types on which to train pilots for the R.A.F. direct was perhaps just understandable. But to go abroad for machines on which to train "A" licence pilots, the usefulness of the majority of whom will be extremely limited, is quite absurd, and totally unjust to our own manufacturers of light aircraft, as well as being entirely unnecessary.

Canadian Co-ordination

WHATEVER may be one's views of the wisdom or necessity of buying aeroplanes in America, no one can fail to applaud the decision to place orders for military aircraft in Canada. Nobody, the British aircraft industry least of all, minds Canada doing its bit towards